

Australian Sports System – Review

Golf Australia Submission

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This paper has been prepared in consultation and collaboration with PGA Australia, the representative organisation for over 2500 professional golfers in Australia. The views expressed in this document are reflective of the overall golf industry in Australia.

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Comments in relation to Terms of Reference

1. Ensure Australia's continued elite sporting success

Identify any areas of duplication within Australia's sporting system and recommend ways to build a more efficient system.

- The current separate Commonwealth and state government planning and funding models for sport are not co-ordinated and creates duplication in both elite and participation programs. It is suggested there would be great benefit, especially in promoting sport participation programs, in progressing a uniform national approach – similar to the approach progressed in areas such as the National Drug Offensive media campaigns and through the COAG process with industries such as Occupational Health & Safety and Transport. Sport/Health promotion campaigns could be run nationally and delivered by state agencies in conjunction with individual sports. Sports such as golf would need to be involved in such planning and be ready and able to deliver on the ground programs to support national campaigns.

Examine the relationship between the Australian Sports Commission, Australian Institute of Sport, State and Territory Institutes, academies of sport and regional institutes and how this relationship could deliver better athlete pathways.

- The current system, whilst having produced many major achievements, could be further developed and streamlined. There is definitely competition and conflict between the AIS and state institutes in the way they deal with various sports. While some internal competition between the various institutes is healthy, it must take place under an agreed national sport plan in a manner that avoids the pitfalls of the current arrangement. A weakness in the current system that causes areas of duplication is the proprietorial approach taken to athletes i.e. an athlete belongs to the AIS Program or the VIS Program etc. A different approach would be for the NSO in conjunction with the SSO, to

identify the overall suite of services an athlete needs and then coordinate the best way for the athlete to access those services. In some cases the athlete may get access to all services at one place and in other cases the athlete may get some services via one institute and other services elsewhere.

- It is proposed that a full audit be conducted “by sport” and recommendations made as to the most efficient way forward. There should be an agreed plan for each sport – clearly outlining the respective role of the AIS or state institute and formal agreements entered into in regard such roles and responsibilities and the funding model agreed accordingly. The main area of improvement required is in relation to AIS/state relationships.
- It is also proposed that the AIS funding model consider the extension of a program to assist international competition opportunities for athletes – a weakness due to Australia’s geographic isolation. There could be a centralised funding model for this made available upon application of individual sports which meet specified criteria.

Recommend opportunities to ensure maximum returns from talent identification programs

- The AIS/ASC has done a lot of work in this area for some sports but not others. It is proposed that national guidance in this area for all sports should be progressed.
- It is proposed that some sports, such as golf, have an extensive network capable of talent identification which is not being properly utilised – eg the PGA’s network of professionals in over 600 clubs in Australia and the network of community coaches and development officers. Although there are sophisticated structures in some states, others fall behind and this area requires national co-ordination, in conjunction with the sport, to improve identification of potential stars of the future

Better place sport and physical activity as a key component of the Government's preventative health approach

Examine Government frameworks to ensure an on-going focus on grassroots and community sport and physical activity.

- It is clear that federally the majority of the focus has been biased towards the elite side of sport. In the 2006/07 year the Australian Government spent \$137.1 million on elite sport and \$67 on grassroots sport and recreation. Over half of the grassroots investment was directed at the Active After School Community program which has achieved a measured level of success and has reached a very small market. If this program is excluded from consideration, the end result is that less than \$33 million was spent on grassroots participation for the rest of the Australian population. Putting this further in context particularly given the preventative health benefits of sport, in 2006/07 the budget for the Health Department was \$44.1 billion and it is estimated that the

Federal Government bears some \$1.4 billion of direct financial costs in relation to preventative disease.

- Sport's contribution to the health, happiness and well-being of populations is well established and acknowledged by governments worldwide. A graphic example of the health benefits of sport is a recent study conducted by the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, which was published earlier this year. The report found that the death rate amongst golfers is 40 per cent lower than the rest of the population, which equates to an increased life expectancy of five years. The study is based on data from 300,000 Swedish golfers and shows that golf has beneficial health effects regardless of sex, age and social group. The effect is greater for golfers from blue-collar professions than for those from white-collar professions.
- Government frameworks and funding models should be re-assessed and more directly related to the organised sports which have high participation rates, can be played/participated in from a young age and throughout adult life, and which deliver physical, social and mental health benefits. The current framework heavily favours Olympic sports only. It is argued that lifelong and low risk injury impact sports/activities such as aerobics/fitness, golf, tennis, netball and outdoor football (the top five activities with highest participation rates of organised sports in the latest ASC – ERASS survey) should be proportionally acknowledged in the funding framework support by government.
- The following table is submitted for consideration in the Review in relation to the "performance outcomes" of sports in relation to the value for current government investment. It identifies participation rates generally and participation in organised sports/activities (referenced from the ASC 2007 ERASS participation survey), ASC funding for sports (taken from the ASC 2006/07 Annual Report), per person funding based on organised sports, a comment on the potential long term health benefits of the sport/activity and a comment against the sport/activity's value as an international sport/activity and current performances by Australians on the world stage.

Sport	Total Participation 2007 ERASS survey	Participation as an organised sport (ERASS)	Funding from ASC 2006/07	ASC funding per person (based on participation as an organised sport)	Comment re potential for long term health benefits etc	Comment re profile, international coverage, performance on world stage etc
Athletics	115,500	96,300	\$6,125,500	\$63.60 per person (pp)	Junior focus, limited adult participation	Olympic sport. Recent history of limited success by Australian athletes.
Australian football	308,700	241,500	\$486,000	\$2.01 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation	Basically played in Australia, massive TV coverage, high profile
Basketball	496,800	353,400	\$4,764,300	\$13.48 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation but higher involvement than some other team sports	Olympic sport. Recent strong success by Australian teams.
Bowls (Lawn)	236,500	229,100	\$661,000	\$2.88 pp	Adult focused – long term health and social benefits	Limited play in Commonwealth countries – strong international success
Cricket (outdoor)	412,000	264,100	\$733,900	\$2.77 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation	Limited play in Commonwealth countries – strong international success
Cycling	1,591,100	121,500	\$5,281,600	\$43.46 pp	Junior and adult focus	Olympic sport. Recent

					- long term health and social benefits	strong success by Australian teams.
Football (outdoor)	683,000	418,000	\$3,331,600	\$7.97 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation but higher involvement than some other team sports	Olympic sport – true international sport. Recent success at World Cup qualifying stage.
Golf	915,000	513,000	\$965,600	\$1.88 pp	Adult focused – long term health and social benefits	Truly international sport. 10 men and 4 women currently in world top 100 rankings.
Gymnastics	41,100	17,200	\$2,828,700	\$164 .45 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation	Olympic sport. Recent strong success by Australian teams.
Hockey (outdoor)	100,300	94,600	\$5,496,500	\$58.10 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation	Olympic sport. Recent strong success by Australian teams.
Martial arts (judo, karate, taekwondo combined)	308,400	259,000	\$1,972,300	\$7.61 pp	Junior and adult focus -	Olympic sport. Some recent success by Australian teams.
Netball	518,400	438,900	\$2,276,900	\$5 .18 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation but higher involvement than some other team sports	Limited play in Commonwealth countries – strong international success
Rowing	70,000	46,000	\$5,633,000	\$122.45 pp	Junior and adult focus - long term health and social benefits	Olympic sport. Recent success by Australians
Rugby League	175,200	138,000	\$463,300	\$3.35 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation	Limited international competition. High success internationally.
Rugby Union	127,900	106,900	469,000	\$4.38 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation	Reasonable international competition. High success internationally.
Sailing	82,400	48,700	\$4,360,787	\$89.54 pp	Junior and adult focus - long term health and social benefits	Olympic sport. Recent success by Australians
Squash	192,400	90,500	\$964,600	\$10.65 pp	Junior and adult focus - long term health and social benefits	Limited international competition – strong international success
Swimming	1,966,200	305,100	\$6,348,400	\$20.92 pp	Junior and adult focus - long term health and social benefits	Olympic sport. Continuous strong success by Australian teams
Tennis	951,000	427,200	\$889,000	\$2.08 pp	Junior and adult focus - long term health and social benefits	Olympic and international sport. Small number of Australians in world rankings top 100.
Volleyball	122,700	86,900	\$2,913,050	\$33.52 pp	Junior focus, limited adult participation	Olympic sport. Limited success by Australian teams

Examine Government programs to increase participation rates in sport and physical activity, including analysis of existing programs.

- In terms of existing programs the Active After School Community (AASC) program tackles a very obvious problem and is basically a good start. It had some significant start-up problems that have not been fully eradicated, in particular its disassociation from NSO's and the programs that they are running. The major weakness of the program is that it hasn't captured enough children. In terms of the amount of money invested in the program and given that it absorbs over half of the funding that is directed into participation, the return on investment is not yet where it should be. In relation to the golf program, however, it is pleasing that numbers are growing around the country. (See table below)

	2005	total	2006	total	2007	Total
	Programs	Participants	Programs	Participants	term 1 & 2 Programs	Participants
NSW	4	107	7	188	14	354
NT	3	80	3	80	0	0
QLD	13	418	20	527	14	404
SA	12	279	14	293	16	372
TAS	7	157	9	228	6	146
VIC	36	945	43	1182	49	1297
WA	8	152	11	241	18	461
Total	83	2138	107	2739	117	3034

- However, it must be acknowledged that although this program has shown benefits, it also shows that the government has missed the opportunity to really make a difference to the broader base of primary school aged children. Professional associations such as the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education & Recreation (ACHPER) have for many years lobbied for governments to fund trained Physical Education teachers in primary Schools and for formal daily physical education/fitness programs to be conducted in schools. The golf industry strongly supports this approach and believes that this would have a major impact on future long term participation rates in sport and physical activity for adolescents and adults. The impact on health, lowering obesity levels and reducing the incidence of mental illnesses will also be significant. Early attitudes and habits are often carried through life. This would also allow individual sports to better support and target school programs, as a specialist will be far more effective delivering programs than a “generalist” primary teacher.

Identify and recommend opportunities to break down barriers to participation at junior, adult and senior ages with a view to making it simpler and easier for Australians to participate in the sport or physical activity of their choice, including for women, the disabled and Indigenous people.

- The major inhibitors for participation in sport are cost, time, access to facilities and competing interests. These apply differently to the various age groups and market segments.
- In terms of juniors, cost and access to facilities are the two major barriers. In regard to the cost aspect, several studies have listed it as a key deterrent for children playing sport, particularly for low-income earners. An opportunity exists for the introduction of a tax rebate scheme to help alleviate economic barriers that inhibit participation growth rates. The rebate scheme being proposed by

the Australian Sports Federation Alliance, allows parents, guardians and carers of dependent children to make a per child claim for approved costs associated with their child or children's involvement in an eligible sport or active recreation activity. We believe this scheme has obvious merit and should be carefully considered. The scheme proposes a minimum tax deductible amount of \$250, which for the bulk of Australian families would provide around \$75 relief per child per annum.

- The benefits of organised sport for children are well documented, as are statistics outlining their reduced access to it in the current environment. Based on figures provided by the Australian Sports Federation Alliance paper, the annual cost of the rebate program would be in the order of \$113 million per annum. Considered against the costs of lifestyle diseases which have been estimated at \$3.7 billion annually, the rebate scheme appears to present an opportunity to reduce the costs of what are in many cases preventable diseases and strengthen grassroots sport in the process.
- In terms of golf and junior participation, another significant barrier which is partly a factor of cost issues, is the lack of access to playing opportunities on golf courses. The expensive maintenance of the golf course infrastructure creates an economic model that focuses more on adults than juniors, who are often seen "as a cost" for a golf club instead of an investment in the future. The tax rebate scheme will assist this area, however sport also needs to work with government to progress plans and incentives for clubs to foster more junior development programs and convince clubs of the long term benefits of embracing juniors. National and state golf administrations, junior foundations and PGA professionals are all willing and keen to progress junior golf but barriers must be broken down.
- Adult and Seniors – although this is the predominant age playing the game currently, with an ageing population there is tremendous scope to substantially increase the numbers playing golf and/or similar low impact, positive health and social benefit sports (such as tennis, bowls etc). It is proposed that a national campaign with a preventative health message targeting adults to "learn a new game and get fit" would be supported by individual sports and their "on the ground" participation programs. Golf clearly has the national infrastructure through clubs and PGA professionals to teach people the game and provide them with playing and social opportunities. Other sports identified could do similar, running on the back of a national campaign. Cost is also a barrier to adult and senior participation, particularly in rural areas, however, it is inescapable in many ways because of the significant operating costs of running and maintaining a golf club. A subsidy or tax rebate system for eligible golfers (i.e. junior, senior or female) would be extremely beneficial to increasing participation levels. Another option within this initiative would be to give subsidies for golf courses in order to bring down membership costs. As part of this arrangement clubs would be required to run approved programs for juniors, women and seniors.

- Women – there is a massive potential, similar to issues above, to introduce adult women to golf and other low impact/positive health benefit sports. Currently only 22% of the golfing population are women. A key strategy is to introduce more young girls to golf and build a bond with them that lasts into their adult years. Initiatives such as the Women in Golf program being run through the ASC are very positive and will pay dividends if they can be coupled with some additional funding to run more detailed marketing programs that make it easier for females to get into golf and be nurtured through the initial stages of their development.
- More and more opportunities for disabled people to play sports are being created. Within golf the ASC's Sports Connect Program has had some success in increasing opportunities for people with a disability to play golf. The danger with this program is its sustainability in the long term once funding is no longer available, particularly for sports which are facing challenging financial times.
- Golf has been proactive in increasing access for indigenous people to play the game. It has run a coordinated program throughout the states and has created and held several Indigenous Championships to create role models and give indigenous people more access to the game. The major problem with this program is the lack of funds that are available to run initiatives.

Recommend strategies to increase the effectiveness of the promotion of sport by the Federal Government to better communicate positive health and activity messages to the broader community.

- There are obviously different messages for differing age groups that the government needs to explore to better communicate positive health messages to the community in relation to their participation in sport. We would argue that in relation to adults a national campaign with a preventative health message targeting adults to "learn a new game and get fit" to be supported by individual sports and their "on the ground" participation programs, could have enormous benefit. Government needs to identify and partner with sports that have a participation focus and can offer participation opportunities for a significant segment of the population. There needs to be a coordinated message between Government and sports about promoting, increasing and simplifying entry points into the sport. A specific strategy in this case would be providing promotional information for sports to GP's, and other health professionals that they can distribute.
- Lobby for the reintroduction of a minimum amount of phys ed in schools from prep to year 12.
- A national participation program on TV, newspapers & radio to encourage activity "for the good of our future, and yours".
- Encourage media coverage (most probably newspapers) to include youth , women's and non-mainstream sports coverage

Strengthen pathways from junior sport to grassroots community sport right through to elite and professional sport

Examine the capacity of the system to ensure optimal and efficient delivery of the athlete and coach pathway for any given sport.

- Overall the capacity of the system to deliver optimal and efficient athlete and coach pathways is limited, although it obviously varies dramatically from sport to sport. In a number of sports Australia's system is nowhere near as efficient as its international competitors, for several important reasons. The most glaring of these is that Australia does not have the same level of government investment into the development of athletes and coaches. Compared with the likes of Great Britain, China and Germany, Australia's expenditure is miniscule and this has an impact on our ability to offer development opportunities for athletes and coaches. Additionally our international competition opportunities are limited due the huge travel, accommodation and time costs involved. Probably the single biggest failing of the system is its inability to influence the development and activity of coaches who aren't directly employed in Institute programs. In simple terms your ability to develop or influence a coach who receives around \$2000 - \$5000 p.a. in funding is limited.
- There is no doubt that the sports that are best equipped to deliver a successful athlete and coach pathway are those where a larger number of coaches are able to make a living directly from coaching activities within the sport. Obviously golf is very strong within this area as are sports such as tennis, football and swimming (via Learn to Swim programs). In terms of the pathway, golf's biggest challenge is giving its developing players an appropriate level of international competition experience. This was clearly visible at the recent World Amateur Teams Championships in Adelaide, where many other teams had far greater experience and exposure to significant international competition, than the Australian teams.
- In terms of common elements for sports there are a few general principles that must be included in the system for successful outcomes to be achieved. These are; Have an efficient accreditation system and increase the base of accredited coaches; Elite player and coach pathway programs need to be aligned through a formal process of negotiation; and sports and their delivery partners need to clearly understand and articulate their concept of the athlete / coach pathway for their sport.

Recommend the most effective support and recognition for the coaches, officials, umpires, administrators and volunteers who keep our community clubs alive.

- A more structured recognition/awards type scheme at state and national levels may provide higher profile and recognition of all these groups. Initiatives such as the Australia Sport Medal have proved popular with recipients and have been successful in providing appropriate recognition.
- It is essential to examine current legislative requirements that may be making it more difficult for sports to recruit people into these roles. The level of training

and compliance requirements being forced on to volunteers has increased in recent years. Accreditation in important areas such as child protection, liquor licensing and food safety for example have grown considerably. One of the problems is the wide variance in state legislation and the lack of understanding of the impact that unwieldy accreditation or training requirements has on sporting clubs, particularly on small clubs or those located in rural and remote areas. Greater national uniformity of legislation would be useful as would a clearer understanding of the impact of legislation on sporting clubs.

Examine how relationships between the Commonwealth Government and National Sporting Organisations, State Sporting Organisations and Australia's peak representative bodies at key multi-sports competitions may be strengthened to deliver better performance outcomes.

- It is presumed that reference to multi – sports competitions refer to Olympic and Commonwealth Games events. As a current non-Olympic sport, golf is not well positioned to make an informed comment on the issue of relationships between the various stakeholders in relation to multi-sports events. However, we believe it is appropriate to make the point here that the government must review its current support for sports and its return on investment in all sports – not just Olympic sports. (See previous table.)
- There is clearly a fixation on Olympic Sports which in our view is not helpful in getting the best across the board outcomes for Australians. The ASC and Federal Government must become more sophisticated in how they measure the success of all sports' performances and also how they measure the social and economic contribution that sports make. While it is easy to plot and chart Olympic medals and compare performances against other nations, there must be a better approach to measuring and recognising the performances of non-Olympic sports. Compare for a moment the emotional investment Australians made in the non-Olympic performance of Cadel Evans in the Tour de France with the performances of Australia's Olympic cycling team in Beijing. There is no doubt the non-Olympic cycling performance made a greater impact with the nation and left a greater legacy for the sport to harness.
- Related to this is the overall social and economic impact of sports that needs to be more closely measured and recognised by Government. In a study undertaken by Ernst and Young in 2006, golf's annual economic impact was estimated to be \$2.7 billion in Australia alone. The study also outlined that golf was responsible for sustaining 23,000 jobs. Clearly these are hugely significant figures that must be considered when Government makes funding and investment decisions.

Maintain Australia's cutting edge approach to sports science, research and technology

Examine the capacity of the system to ensure provision of cutting edge technology, innovation, sport science, sports medicine, applied research to underpin sport performance and development, including ways to maintain Australia's position as leaders in anti-doping.

- Australia's capacity in the areas of cutting edge technology, innovation, sport science, sports medicine, applied research to underpin sport performance and development remains a strength of the system. Despite this assessment, a number of international competitors have improved this area of operation significantly and it no longer provides the competitive advantage to Australia that it once did. Probably one area where the system could be improved is through better alignment of the various entities in the AIS and SIS/SAS network.

Examine the current partnerships in place within these fields and recommend any potential partnerships

- The logical area for the increase of partnerships in this area is with Universities and Institutes throughout the country. The University system generally in Australia makes a limited contribution to Australian sport, particularly when compared with the US system. Certainly universities conducting sports science courses could be better utilised in partnership arrangements and universities could fill the void where institute programs do not exist at all. Some sports are starting to do this of their accord.

Identify opportunities to increase and diversify the funding base for sport through corporate sponsorship, media and any recommended reforms, such as enhancing the effectiveness of the Australian Sports Foundation

- It is proposed that a review of the restrictive nature of the Australian Sports Foundation (ASF) be undertaken. Currently the ASF guidelines are too focused on amateur sports at a local level and deter possible private contributions to help develop sports such as golf at a national level. The eligibility for tax deductible donations should be extended to allow a range of broader areas which meets criteria of promoting sport (eg to extend to acceptance of prizemoney for tournaments which showcase the sport). On this matter, for many years in the USA the government tax laws have allowed for full tax deductibility for sponsorship of professional sports. Such a consideration by the Australian government (taxation legislation) would be a way of increasing private sector funding into professional sporting tournaments/events. It is important to recognise that for many sports including golf, the running of large national championship events is becoming more and more problematic. With changes in the TV rights landscape, more Australians competing abroad rather than within Australia and an ever tightening sponsorship market, events such as the Australian Open Golf Championship have gone from delivering a modest profit to the sport to potentially becoming a financial black hole that drains sports of its capital reserves. These events are iconic events and part of Australia's sporting history. Australian governments must do more to assist these events to remain in their rightful place as important and cherished events on our national sporting calendar. Governments should be looking at ways of making private investment into sport more attractive through increased tax offsets, similar to the film tax offset that was successful in growing the Australian film industry. Additionally

governments should be looking at ways to increase the overall sponsorship pool that sports can access. When considering important issues such as restricting the sponsorship access of alcohol and fast food products, they must clearly understand the massive impact it will have on sports and their ability to deliver programs that have more people playing sport.

- On another issue relating to tax, a major disincentive for overseas sports people playing for prize money in Australia is the current cumbersome and complex procedures for paying tax (at the highest applicable rate) and then claiming tax back from the Australian government. Not only is this system a major disincentive for players it is an administrative nightmare for sporting associations. It is also very negative for professional sports such as golf, as it makes it more difficult to entice overseas based players to play our tournaments in Australia. Having our international stars (and other world class players) play in Australia is crucial to the promotion of the sport at the highest level, which we know has a direct relationship to increasing participation levels at grass roots, and the subsequent preventative health benefits that this increased participation will bring.
- As referred to in an earlier section a tax rebate system that allows parents, guardians and carers of dependent children to make a per child claim for approved costs associated with their child or children's involvement in an eligible sport or active recreation activity. We believe this scheme will provide some financial benefits to clubs via increased membership numbers.